

Education Improvement Committee

April 7, 2014

Meeting Notes

Members in attendance: Richard Westerberg, Don Soltman, Emma Atchley, Rod Lewis, Bob Lokken, Linda Clark, Senator John Goedde, Representative Wendy Horman, Representative Lance Clow, Senator Janie Ward-Engelking, Superintendent Tom Luna, Rob Winslow, Jessica Harrision, Wayne Freedman, Representative Reed DeMourdont, Representative Marc Gibbs, Geoffrey Thomas Rod Gramer, Christina Linder, Bill Brulotte, Reed DeMourdont, Donna Pence, Dean Mortimer, Alan Millar, Cheryl Charlton, Penni Cyr, Corinne Mantle-Bromley, George Harad and Cindy Wilson.

Members not present: Zach Wesley, Paula Conley, Brian Smith, Roy Lacey, Anne Ritter, Karen Echeverria, Mary Ann Ranells, and Tom Taggart.

Chairman Richard Westerberg welcomed the members of the Education Improvement Committee and thanked them for their willingness to serve. He stated that following opening remarks, the two major committees, Structure & Governance and Career Ladder & Tiered Licensure would break away into separate rooms to begin their process.

Senator Goedde reviewed the current status of the Governor's Task Force Recommendations, which are attached.

Representative DeMourdont congratulated the members who had served on the original Task Force for their work, and said that the recommendations that came forth strongly influenced the course of the 2014 Legislative Session. This resulted from (1) good ideas; (2) unanimous agreement from Task Force, and (3) the legitimacy of the process. Representative DeMourdont stressed that the Task Force had operated with one over-arching goal: to improve education in Idaho by adopting the State Board of Education goal of 60% of Idaho adults achieving a minimum of two years postsecondary education by the year 2020. From that goal, clear objectives were developed and open-minded research led to the final recommendations. He urged the current committee to keep those concepts in mind. "We have a foundation", he said, "but we have not yet built a house."

At the beginning of the legislative session, both the House and the Senate Education Committees reviewed each of the Task Force Recommendations in depth which is why the legislature was able to accomplish so much. The public forum on Common Core, with equal numbers of panel members both for and against the standards, was an important

component of continuing discussion and keeping facts about Idaho Core Standards before the public.

Representative DeMourrant explained that in restoring discretionary funding to school districts, some felt that the name should be changed to “operational” funds rather than discretionary, since this category included essentials such as keeping the lights on, paying for health insurance costs. But operational spending has specific meaning in use, like lights, but does not cover personnel benefits such as health insurance, and so the category is still called discretionary. In his view, discretionary is not “angel money” that is “nice to have”. It means districts use discretion in how the money is being spent.

Representative DeMourrant said that development of a mastery based system is truly transformative in nature. The House Education Committee has several presentations on what is being done and was encouraged to review current research. Three critical areas the mastery concept are competency rubrics, seat time waivers and meaningful assessments.

Representative DeMourrant said that Representative Lance Clow had conducted considerable research into tiered licensure , and encouraged that committee to turn to Representative Clow for his research.

In conclusion, Representative DeMourrant encouraged the committee members to look to overriding goals so that the Legislature in 2015 will again see the transparency of the process.

Chairman Westerberg stated that each committee has a charter which defines its areas of inquiry. He reminded the members that their deliberations are an open process, sometime vigorous, but always respectful. The State Board of Education has been asked to supervise the process, under the direction of its President, Mike Rush. A third committee will be formed soon to study literacy under the direction of the State Department of Education. Late-August/early-September shall be the target dates for completion of the committee’s work. Chairman Westerberg again thanked the members for the participation, and looked forward to their results and recommendations.

The members then adjourned to their respective committee meeting rooms.